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S. Exc. Mr Tadamichi YAMAMOTO
Ambassador extraordinary, Permanent Delegate,
Permanent delegation of Japan to UNESCO
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14 September 2010

IUCN Evaluation of the “Ogasawara Islands” (Japan) – Request for Supplementary Information

Dear Ambassador,

I refer to the IUCN World Heritage technical evaluation mission to the Ogasawara Islands, Japan undertaken by Mr. Peter Shadie and Dr. Naomi Doak from 01 to 16 July, 2010. Both the IUCN evaluators greatly appreciated the excellent support and cooperation afforded to the mission by all levels of Government and also the local communities of Chichijima and Hahajima Islands. I take the opportunity, along with the evaluators, to pass on IUCN's sincere thanks to all concerned for the organization of the mission.

As noted in previous correspondence, IUCN seeks to maintain a dialogue with the State Party during the evaluation process to ensure that all necessary information is brought forward and to clarify any questions that may arise. In addition to the information provided we would thus like to kindly ask for clarification of the points listed hereafter:

1. Marine components of the boundary of the nominated property

The mission noted that the nominated property which comprises 7,408 ha is predominantly made up of terrestrial areas. Around 14% of the property comprises marine environment which either aligns with the Marine Park Zones designated under the Natural Parks Act or with the National Natural Monument designated under the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties. Whilst some of the Marine Park Zones are included within the nominated property, some are excluded. The rationale for defining the boundary of the nominated property based on science and values is acknowledged; however, the mission felt that management effectiveness and therefore the integrity of the property would be better served if more marine areas were able to be included within the nominated property. The ecological function of an oceanic island ecosystem such as the Ogasawara Islands is a product of the dynamic interplay between terrestrial and marine environments. IUCN would therefore be grateful for the State Party's view regarding the possibility of expanding the boundaries so as to incorporate all of the existing Marine Park Zones. From a technical perspective, such an increase could positively influence the integrity and facilitate more effective management.

2. Buffer Zone

The mission commends the State Party's decision prior to nomination to extend the boundary of Ogasawara Islands National Park to 5 kilometers off shore from most of the island groups. At the same time the mission noted that the nominated property has been put forward without a formal buffer zone. Nonetheless the mission viewed the nominated World Heritage property as, in effect, a core zone within the larger Ogasawara Islands National Park, and so in practice surrounded by an effective buffer zone consistent with the meaning under the Operational Guidelines. At this point, the relationship between the nominated property and the broader National Park needs further clarification. The State Party is kindly asked to confirm that, in effect, the surrounding national park designation serves as a functional buffer zone for the nominated property in line with the provisions in the Operational Guidelines.

3. Extent of alien invasive species

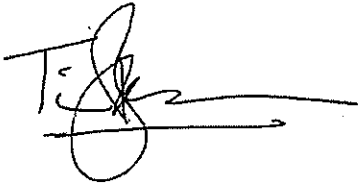
The mission learned that a comprehensive mapping exercise is underway to document the extent of alien invasive plant species in the islands. The evaluation would be better informed by access to this information on the extent of infestations particularly for key invasive species such as *Casuarina*, *Bishopia*, *Lantana* and Okinawa Pine. IUCN would be most grateful for copies of these maps as they become available.

The formal deadline for submission of supplementary information is 28 February 2011. If possible, we would be most grateful if you could provide us with the information prior to the IUCN World Heritage Panel starting on 29 November 2010. This would allow us to consider the information at this occasion.

Please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Tilman Jaeger, World Heritage Project Management Officer, if you have any questions with respect to this request for supplementary information

Let me again reiterate our thanks for your support of the World Heritage Convention and for the conduct of IUCN's recent mission. We look forward to your kind cooperation in furnishing responses to the abovementioned points.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'T. Badman', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Tim Badman
Head - World Heritage Programme